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ABSTRACT

Project AHEAD (Army Help for Education and Development) is a program carried out by hundreds of participating colleges and universities to aid veterans and current military personnel in completing their education. The project can be used by recruiters to encourage volunteers to prepare for their personal futures as well as for their military advancement and promotion. It allows communities and community leaders to keep youth in their own areas by recruiting youth for post-Army commitment in their own state. Project AHEAD is seen as a method of tying existing educational programs together under a single marketing plan which will strongly appeal to educators, parents, influencers, and the educationally motivated man or woman. The program of higher education is operated by the participating colleges, with the Army acting only as the vehicle for implementing it. The potential market for the schools is new enlistees entering the Army and the 780,000 soldiers already on active duty. (LBH)

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PROJECT ahead

A New Program in Cooperative Education.

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JANUARY 1975

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INTRODUCTION

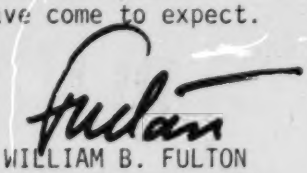
Over the last year we have proven that we can recruit the numbers needed to man the ranks of the volunteer Army. The training you have provided recruiters, both old timers and those newly assigned, has played an important role in keeping them charged up and prepared to accomplish their mission. For that effort, you have the thanks and appreciation of the entire US Army.

We are now faced with still another challenge. The people of the United States, their representatives in the Congress, the members of the news media, and "Army watchers" everywhere, are alert to see that we justify the great expenditures of Federal funds we are using to meet our goals. Their measure, it seems to me, is based on visible proof that the men and women we are enlisting are success-oriented, motivated, quality young people.

I believe Project AHEAD is the tool which will enable us to tap the quality market of prospects who fit that description. There are untold thousands of young people who are striving to prepare themselves for careers. They want education, and they want training. With Project AHEAD, the Army will now be prepared to help them achieve both of these objectives. Go after the quality people in the 1975 high school classes and last year's class. Use the DEP to sign them up as much as 9 months ahead of entry into the Army.

In your professional development training, you have a big job to do. The results of your efforts will be measured in the quality of new enlistees who want to take part in Project AHEAD. These will be visible results which will shout out loudly and clearly as we put together the best Army in the 200-year history of the United States of America.

Become involved. Be enthusiastic. You are the keystone of an effort which will be in the eyes of the American public. I am confident you will do the job in the manner I have come to expect.



WILLIAM B. FULTON
Major General, USA
Commanding

CHAPTER I

THE SCOPE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT AHEAD

A Historical Overview

In recent years, higher education officials have been searching for new and innovative programs to deal with the mounting problems of financial support and student recruitment. Project AHEAD, Army Help for Education And Development, is one such program. It has its roots in a concept introduced at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) in 1973. In conjunction with an individual's enlistment into the Army, EMU began offering a program of admission to the University with all the rights and privileges extended to new students. All the new enlistee had to do was to fill out an application to become eligible, and even entrance fees were waived. Applicants were asked to submit a high school transcript, available test scores and records of any courses taken beyond high school for inclusion in his or her academic file. Thus, an enlistee in the Army simultaneously became a bona fide college student.

EMU also served as counseling agent and academic credit depository during a person's active duty time. The EMU program facilitated earning credits toward a college degree in a variety of ways. Realizing that people receive an education in many nontraditional ways, the University evaluated military training, schooling and experience for college-level credit. The soldier/student could also choose a variety of courses offered by colleges

and universities at Army education centers around the world. All this information was evaluated and added to the student's record maintained at Eastern Michigan University.

As the EMU program took shape, the far-reaching implications for the Army as well as colleges became evident. Recognizing the potential value to all concerned, the Midwestern Regional Recruiting Command involved several district recruiting commands in a program to develop and refine the cooperative concept with colleges and universities in their own areas.

New insights into the program's potential, operating procedures, opportunities and benefits were gained with every new school that expressed interest. In the spring of 1974, a task force of Ayer field representatives who were involved in establishing the program at various colleges was brought to USAREC. Under the guidance of the Education Liaison Branch they produced an analysis of the emerging USAREC Cooperative Education Program known as Project AHEAD. The Peoria District Recruiting Command was tasked with a test project to present the program to all the 2-year colleges in its area. The schools responded enthusiastically. This response, coupled with that of several Illinois universities plus continuing positive comments from other district recruiting commands, pointed to the next obvious step--expansion of the AHEAD program by USAREC on a full-fledged national basis.

New Names - Same Program

Several different names have been used to describe the program since its inception at Eastern Michigan University. EMU coined the term "open admissions program." However, Army representatives soon found that this term had certain negative connotations with some colleges because of the implications that admission standards would have to be lowered to accomodate the student/soldier. "Open enrollment" alleviated this situation by assuring schools that, while they agreed to allow soldiers to make application, the standards for admission were established by the colleges themselves. In the evolutionary process, the term "cooperative education" has been found to be most suitable and expresses the mutual desires of the Army and the educational community to provide the very best in educational opportunities to the nation's young people.

Known as Project AHEAD

Within the Army the program is known as Project AHEAD: Army Help for Education And Development. This title describes the interest and involvement of the Army in the continuing process of education as a means for young people to gain fulfillment and self-actualization. It also expresses the cooperative nature of the program. It is not an Army program which is independent and self-contained. It is the Army opening new avenues for colleges and universities to do what they do best--provide the very best education possible to the youth of this nation.

The participating colleges and universities own and operate their own program. Many schools have devised their own names for the program such as "Home Base," "Military Enlistment Education Program," and "Open Enrollment." External identification depends upon the participating schools. Each school should be encouraged to develop a title which best describes its program. This is in line with the emphasis that once the concept is presented to a school, that school determines how the program will be conducted and how much emphasis it will receive within the guidelines established.

Although the Army has pioneered Project AHEAD, the program applies to the other armed services as well. The Army, however, has led the way and has the extensive onpost educational organization and record of cooperation with colleges and universities furnishing onpost educational support. Combined with the Project AHEAD schools, this is the gateway to truly comprehensive in-service educational opportunities for every serviceman and service woman.

Total Marketing Approach

Project AHEAD is a program designed to expand the Army's recruiting market to college oriented young people as well as to stimulate in-service personnel to make greater use of Army educational opportunities. Project AHEAD is not a new education option. It ties existing educational programs together under a single marketing plan which will strongly appeal to

educators, parents, influencers and, most importantly, the educationally motivated man or woman. It adds the concept of a simultaneous enlistment/ enrollment at a college near home.

Project AHEAD is not simply an Army program. The program of higher education is operated by the participating colleges. The Army acts only as the vehicle for implementing the program. This cooperation in education forms an unbeatable union for maximum exposure of Army educational benefits. The potential market for the schools is new enlistees entering the Army and the 780,000 soldiers already on active duty.

CHAPTER II

PROJECT AHEAD AND THE PROSPECT

Knowing the Product

The key to successful selling in any situation is to know the product. Project AHEAD is no exception and there is no substitute for studying the program with all its many intricacies. Read and understand every piece of literature, promotional item, and advertisement produced by the US Army Recruiting Command. View films and filmstrips. Listen to the audio tapes. Be on top of the program as thoroughly as you can, not only what it is, but what it can do. Be able to answer reasonable questions that might be put to you in as much detail as is necessary. However, do not overdo the answer--too much information is as bad as too little. The characteristic of an outstanding recruiter is the creative approach to everything he does.

The average recruiter sells the Army.
The creative recruiter sells a new and challenging way of life.

The average recruiter sells jobs.
The creative recruiter sells opportunities to learn skills.

The average recruiter sells a travel option.
The creative recruiter sells the joy of seeing new places.

The average recruiter sells good pay.
The creative recruiter sells prestige and opportunity to earn.

The average recruiter sells security.
The creative recruiter sells opportunities for growth and advancement.

The average recruiter sells Army education.
The creative recruiter sells the value of knowledge and self-fulfillment.

The average recruiter sells Project AHEAD.
The creative recruiter sells ideas about educational opportunities and benefits.

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The more you know about the program and its benefits, the more convincing you are and the more enthusiastic you can be. This isn't the show window kind of frothiness that affects people like some Johnny-come-lately. This means honest, sincere enthusiasm. The kind that comes from knowledge and ability to use the program appropriately. As J. C. Aspley has said, "Enthusiasm is knowledge or fire."

The Four 'B's"

Project AHEAD is not an enlistment option and no guarantees as such can be made about the program. Project AHEAD is an opportunity from which quality people can benefit. It is an excellent prospecting tool for reaching young, nonprior service men and women as well as prior service personnel. And let's not forget that people in the service can also enroll in their "home" college. Project AHEAD is the kind of program from which better people stand to benefit. For easy remembering, we call these benefits "the four B's."

Benefits to the Army

Many research studies underscore the importance of providing prospective recruits with a reason to enlist that is widely acceptable to educators, parents and contemporaries. This fact relates directly to a situation that pervades every aspect of the Army's recruiting effort: the separation and compartmentalizing of the military in general and the Army in particular. Against this background, Project AHEAD offers the Army some very specific benefits:

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1. Better image. Education long has been considered extremely important by the civilian community. Since education has become increasingly important in the Army, a program to highlight educational opportunities in the Army obviously is one excellent method to establish the Army as a sound choice for today's young people at several stages in career preparation.

2. Better soldiers. Continuing education is essential if military personnel are to achieve maximum potential and maintain the desired creative, intellectual and leadership abilities.

3. Better quality enlistee. Project AHEAD opens a large quality market which has been almost entirely closed up to now. Amounting to approximately 45 percent of all high school graduates, this market consists of those who normally go on to some type college after graduation. Many of these individuals would welcome the change to become independent, but cannot afford to support themselves financially while continuing their formal education. By utilizing the continuing education concept, they start taking college courses, develop a financial base, qualify for the GI Bill and gain independence and maturity.

4. Successful student/soldiers can be valuable salesmen for the Army, especially in the role of hometown recruiters.

Benefits to Colleges

Institutions of higher education are facing a wider variety of pressing problems than ever before. These problems are not necessarily the same for

every school, but almost every institution can identify with at least one of the benefits available to participating colleges.

1. A means for increasing enrollments. Increasing costs coupled with curtailed financial aid have adversely affected the enrollment outlook at many colleges. Students from middle income families particularly are feeling the pinch. Project AHEAD provides colleges with a way to offer the possibility of a college education to these students.

2. A method to deal with the dropout problem. Many institutions are experiencing an alarming dropout rate among first and second year students. Project AHEAD enables a school to maintain contact with dropouts while these individuals solve the financial or personal problems that led them to leave school.

3. A more mature student. Research indicates the veteran is much more likely to have the added maturity and defined career goals that make for a better student than the usual graduate fresh out of high school.

4. Easier recruitment of veterans. Project AHEAD enables schools to make contact with Army personnel on active duty who have decided not to reenlist but might well take advantage of the GI Bill to become full-time students if approached.

5. Community recognition and local publicity. An important dimension of a college's existence today in the age of declining enrollments and

spiraling educational costs is community recognition of its efforts to provide the best opportunities for the continued education of the young people served by the school.

6. Identification with a growing national program. The prestige of being associated with some of the finest colleges in the United States in a new and innovative program will provide the schools with needed recognition.

Benefits to the Individual

The strongest selling point of Project AHEAD is the opportunity of continued education with its inherent qualities for self-fulfillment and increased lifetime earnings. Many of the benefits to college-oriented individuals parallel the benefits of the colleges, Army, and the nation. But they apply in a more intimate way because the real benefit of the program is people helping people do better.

1. Financial:

a. Possibility of being able to build up savings from wages while on active duty.

b. Army assistance in covering most of the tuition costs for courses taken while on active duty.

c. GI Bill, which can be applied to expenses incurred as a student following active duty.

2. Develop maturity important to career development.

3. Opportunity to obtain skill training related to occupational goals.

4. Provide student/soldiers strong identification and affiliation with a specific school which will aid in achieving educational goals.

a. Central "bank" in which credits earned are organized in a systematic way and applied towards a degree.

b. Academic guidance counseling to assure that only courses which will apply towards graduation are taken while in the Service. This also has a fringe benefit to the Army as it reduces the likelihood of people taking courses which are not applicable and wasting tuition assistance on a nonfunctional program.

5. Provide an opportunity to explore college-level courses at his/her own pace while in the Service with the Army paying up to 75 percent of the tuition costs.

Benefits to the Nation

Any time that institutions and agencies formulate coalitions for the betterment of society, the nation benefits.

1. Mutual support and cooperation between the Army and colleges in achieving educational goals will not only increase the quality of the Army, but society as well.

2. Increased educational levels will produce more productive citizens who are better able to govern themselves.

3. A logical and continuous educational program within the Army will assure that its volunteer status will be maintained.

4. Continuous educational opportunities will assure that the nation's youth achieve their full potential.

How Project AHEAD Works

Project AHEAD is incorporated into the initial recruiter presentation made to a prospect who indicates interest in continuing educational opportunities.

The prospect is provided information about schools participating in Project AHEAD plus a form to use in contacting the colleges in which he or she is interested. Project AHEAD also is applicable in situations where the prospect is a potential or actual college dropout or has entered the Army without having started advanced work beyond high school.

Upon accepting the student, the college acts as the academic depository for credits earned by the student as a result of military training or off-duty study. The college also serves as counseling agent for the student/soldier during the period of active duty.

The student/soldier may earn up to 30 semester hours through the College-level Examination Program (CLEP) testing.

While on active duty, the student/soldier takes regular college courses through colleges active at most Army installations.

These courses are evaluated for credit and the credits are transfered back to the "home" school academic depository. Course selection is based upon periodic contact between the "home" college and the student/soldier.

Having concluded active duty requirements, the student/soldier uses the GI Bill to complete degree requirements at the "home" college.

Most Likely Candidates to Take Advantage of Project AHEAD

Originally aimed at recruits entering military service soon after high school graduation, the program has been expanded to reach an even wider circle of prospects.

1. High school seniors or recent high school graduates. This category can further be broken into specific subgroups.

a. Prospects who really are not sure about going on to college, but might like to try a few courses to get the feel of what to expect.

b. College-oriented, but financially limited individuals.

c. Individuals who feel they are not quite ready for college yet, but would like to start earning a few credits.

d. Individuals who want to explore a variety of possibilities at the same time; hopefully, this type individual could be placed in a job related to career goals.

2. Those who leave college prior to graduation, for financial, personal, or other reasons, but who still wish to work toward a degree.

3. Military personnel already on active duty are provided the opportunity to gain credit for past military training, start compiling a record of credits toward a college degree and take advantage of counseling services offered by participating colleges.

4. The graduate of a 2-year institution, especially a vo-tech school, can be encouraged to view AHEAD as an excellent method to explore a career field, take additional courses and accumulate financial resources while deciding whether to pursue a 4-year degree.

Making Project AHEAD Work

Project AHEAD is not just another promotional gimmick to be kicked off and then forgotten. It is a bona fide educational opportunity which requires effort, forethought, and involvement. It is a people-to-people program which will involve thousands of people, hundreds of colleges, and the full milieu of Army support. Because the program is so expansive, and because each college owns and operates its own cooperative plan there will be minor differences in the programs offered. These differences will not have a direct effect on Project AHEAD because the actual

agreement for enrollment is between the student/soldier and the college and the Army only acts as the vehicle for putting the student and the college in contact with each other. However, there are certain responsibilities which must be carried out efficiently as they are critical to the success of the program.

Responsibilities of the Participating College

The following responsibilities must be accomplished by participating colleges in order to have a viable and aggressive on-campus program.

1. Tailor admission procedures. These could range from expecting a prospective student to follow the standard admissions procedures to devising a streamlined system geared to Project AHEAD applicants.

2. Establish procedures to maintain an academic file on each student.

3. Establish procedures to provide continuing counseling and guidance for each student. Some schools may wish to channel all students through one person, who serves as the advisor for all Project AHEAD enrollees. Others may wish to assign a counselor on the basis of academic specialty.

4. Establish criteria for evaluating/accepting credits earned by student/soldiers. This criteria should cover such areas as CLEP tests and in-service training (basic training and AIT) as well as the courses offered by accredited colleges on installations or through correspondence courses.

The following responsibilities are optional but would provide strength and credibility to the program:

1. Promoting the program. Some colleges will want to promote the program more extensively than others. Promotional efforts should be encouraged since they will help attract the attention of potential enlistment prospects and contribute to a favorable Army image. A simple folder explaining the program as organized at a specific school is particularly important for distribution through recruiting stations. Other techniques that have been used by colleges now in the program include:

a. News conferences to announce establishment of program.

b. Press releases to be sent out to newspapers in areas from which school generally draws students.

c. Public service announcements for radio and TV with school officials serving as spokesmen.

2. Inclusion of a section on the college's program in the catalog. The schools should be encouraged to identify their participation in the program they have established in the college catalog so that students who are interrupting their education prior to graduation will be aware of the opportunity to continue on with education while taking advantage of the benefits which are derived while serving in the Army.

3. Orientation sessions for recruiters. To encourage the best possible working relationship between the school and recruiters, several schools have held orientation sessions for recruiters on campus. These sessions include meeting with school officials, talking about procedures and sitting in on classes.

4. Periodic contact with student/soldier. Such contact does not necessarily have to deal with course requirements. It is important to cement the relationship between the student/soldier and the "home" college, especially as the individual nears the enlistment termination date.

Responsibilities of the Army

The Army's involvement should be viewed in segments into which responsibility can be divided:

1. The recruiter's involvement is that of providing accurate information about the program to prospects, parents, high school counselors and others important to the recruiting effort. The recruiter may also serve as a liaison between the prospect and the school by arranging an appointment at the school for the prospect and even accompanying the prospect to the school.

2. At each Army installation, identifiable officials must be knowledgeable about Project AHEAD and procedures must be established to assist the student/soldier.

a. Policies must be established and published concerning duty time allowed for participation in educational activities.

b. The education center director and his staff must be prepared to work with the student/soldier in implementing a planned curriculum.

c. The establishment and maintenance of good relationships with accredited colleges in the area must be treated as a very important facet of the program.

d. Every new soldier reporting in must be thoroughly briefed about Army educational benefits such as the payment of up to 75 percent of tuition costs, and how these benefits relate to Project AHEAD.

Responsibilities of the Enlistee

Although a recruiter may assist the prospect in accomplishing some of the following tasks, the basic responsibility ultimately rests with the prospect. This fact should be made clear to the prospect when the program is discussed.

1. Make contact with the institution in which he or she is interested in enrolling. The use of a standardized post card available at recruiting stations is one simple and efficient method that can be used.

2. Supply required information such as transcripts and/or high school diplomas to the college as requested for processing application.

3. Decide upon military enlistment related to educational goals.

4. Visit personally with the college designated counselor. This can be done during a leave if not possible before reporting to active duty.

5. Maintain regular correspondence with "home" college during enlistment tour. This is particularly important to insure the right courses are taken to achieve educational goals.

6. Provide the "home" school with proof of completion of basic training, service schools, CLEP tests and all other educational experiences which may qualify for credit toward a degree.

Know Your Prospect

Once you know and understand the mechanics of Project AHEAD, the next step is to know your prospect. Project AHEAD is not for everyone any more than college is for everyone. Project AHEAD is designed to appeal to college-oriented young people who have the ability and ambition to continue their education after successful completion of high school. Generally, Project AHEAD will have strong appeal to the following audiences:

1. High school seniors about to graduate, who have the potential for continued education, but who for reasons such as finances or desire for independence do not plan to enroll in college after graduation.

2. High school graduates who planned to attend college, but were unable to attend because of finances, lack of necessary academic background, or other reasons.

3. Junior or vocational/technical college graduates who, having completed their associate degrees or certifications, now desire to continue on with their education while working in the skill for which they have trained. Stripes for Skills is a plus in approaching this audience and should be used to the fullest extent.

4. College students who must interrupt their education prior to graduation. Entering the Army under Project AHEAD allows these students to remain affiliated with the school in which they were enrolled. At the same time the college will not lose another student to attrition.

5. In-service personnel stand to gain much from Project AHEAD. The same benefits which accrue to the nonprior service man or woman can be enjoyed by enrolling in a participating college while in the service.

This list is by no means complete, but it gives you a base from which to consider new markets for prospecting. The important thing to do is to analyze your market. Just as one person varies from another, so should your presentation. Knowledge of the prospect's background and/or motivation will most often give you a direct clue on how to appeal to his or her needs. You will not use Project AHEAD as a prospecting or sales closing tool on a prospect with a tenth grade education. But if you have a college freshman who feels that college is not really relevant to his desires and he is looking for something new and different, you can offer him the best of two worlds--the opportunity to continue his education and join the Army to earn, learn, and travel.

There is no substitute for person-to-person selling. People influence people, and programs are there to assist in the process. Advertising should bring many quality prospects to the recruiting station to learn more about Project AHEAD and the impressive list of participating schools. But you cannot sit and wait for a "rushing business." It may rush right

past your door. The creative recruiter will use all of the resources at hand to draw quality young men and women. Here are a few examples:

1. Prospect Card File. Your Forms 200 can be your personal contact list. Review the file for prospects who said they were "off to college." With spiraling inflation, they may have found that a college education was beyond their means, or their parents'. If they are still in school, explain the program a little and ask if they might know of someone who is interested.

2. Referrals. There is going to be no better advertisement than a satisfied customer, especially one who is in the Delayed Entry Program. The creative recruiter should be able to get five names from each prospect who enlists in the Army and enrolls in a school under Project AHEAD. These could be your "hottest" leads. Start out by saying "I have a program that I know you are going to like. So-and-so is in this program and told me to call you because he knows you'll be interested." If this idea is developed properly, each subsequent contact could also produce five more leads, creating a pyramid of prospects for you to explore. ASK FOR REFERRALS.

3. REACT System. These leads are already interested in knowing more about the Army and you can identify their educational level. Use the telephone to secure the appointment. Find out what their plans are. A good catchy telephone presentation can pay you dividends. Develop your REACT list of prospects and follow up on your contacts.

4. ASVAB List. Here is an excellent tool. It already identifies those who might be most interested in a Project AHEAD offer which you have to make. Be sure that you review last year's list as well and give "likelies" a telephone call.

5. High School Senior or Graduation List. The possibilities here are unlimited. Again, this list will put you in close contact with quality people. Analyze the list. You may be able to identify four or five key people. Once you have made contact with them, they may be able to put you into contact with others who find Project AHEAD appealing. Do not forget to check last year's list as well.

6. Others. "You are only limited by your imagination," is a fitting statement when refining your prospect list. Other sources could be news stories announcing students who have received national scholastic honors, those who are on the honor roll at school, or in the yearbook. The point is, if you are really interested in them and make a good presentation, they will be interested in you and your offer.

A Couple of Tips

The use of the Delayed Entry Program can give you and your prospect a real boost. It is not a bad idea to place him in at least a 30-day DEP. This will give you plenty of time to thoroughly explain Project AHEAD to the prospect, his or her parents, and you might even have the opportunity

to drop by the high school counselor, too. Most important, however, is the fact that having your prospect in the DEP will give you a chance to make an appointment for him or her to visit the college selected. A counseling session with the academic advisor will get the new student/ soldier off on the right foot in developing his or her schooling while in the service, and will put you miles ahead on "customer satisfaction."

That is just one use of the DEP. There are as many uses as there are people. You could be using it right now with high school seniors who will graduate in May or June. They would have the extra prestige while in school of telling their friends that they have "already been accepted in college." That word would surely get back to counselors and could put you in their corner for assistance. The fact is DEP, short-term or long-term, fits right into Project AHEAD. The important thing to remember, get your prospect enrolled and then get him or her to give you referrals.

When selling Project AHEAD along with other options, do not rule out the Combat Arms. Some of the best educational programs in the Army today are being conducted in the combat divisions. These divisions have the most control over their training time and many of them are including on-duty time for educational development of their soldiers. These divisions train hard and they expect their men and women to be the best. But they are also looking out for their welfare by adapting schedules to fully develop each soldier to his maximum potential. It just might be that the combat

soldier educationally will be way ahead of his combat support contemporary at the end of his first enlistment. Use this as a selling point.

Know Your Influencers

Like it or not, we are all influenced by those who are around us and young people are no exception. Parents, teachers, counselors, and clergymen all exert some influence over the enlistment decision that is made. Project AHEAD is a program that has a strong appeal to each of these people because it offers what every mom and dad, teacher, counselor, and pastor wants for the nation's youth--development of their full potential. For example:

1. Appeal to Parents: Parents will be able to see their sons and daughters continue on with their education while at the same time being placed in a good paying job. The fact of the matter is that many middle-income people earn too much money for their children to receive scholarships or other financial aids so their children can continue their education, but earn too little to afford the high college costs found in many schools today. The appeal of a son or daughter enrolling in school, being able to receive "free" CLEP testing at education centers, have up to 75 percent of tuition cost paid by the government, being independent and earning a good living, and finally receiving the GI Bill rounds out pretty well when you consider the benefits earned while in the Army.

2. Counselors and Other Influencers. The appeal which exists for parents exists for counselors and other influencers. Only the strength of the appeal may change. However, in dealing with guidance counselors the appeals are strengthened in other areas by nature of their responsibilities. Counseling personnel are charged with the responsibility of providing curriculum counseling which will lead young people to preparation for a vocation or continued post-secondary education. The enlistment/enrollment benefits of Project AHEAD provide them with a strong rationale for directing college qualified young people to you for participation in the program. The counselor has more than satisfied his responsibilities when a student joins the Army under Project AHEAD; so have principals and other members of the high school educational community.

Know Your Participating College

To give your presentation authority, you have to know the colleges that are participating in Project AHEAD from your area. This will take a little homework on your part, but will be a bonus to you when talking to prospect, parents, or other influencers. Be sure you know:

1. Its history.
2. How large the enrollment is.
3. Is it public or private.
4. What type of courses and degrees does it offer.
5. Its admissions policies.
6. Is it a 2-year or 4-year college.
7. Who your point-of-contact is at the school.

You Have Done Your Homework
You are Ready to Make the Presentation

We are continually trying to persuade people and they are trying to persuade us. That is the nature of communication. If we did not want to accomplish something, we would not try to communicate. The creative recruiter develops his ability to communicate to a fine art. He is so well prepared and so knowledgeable about the product that his enthusiasm is evident. The steps in using Project AHEAD as a prospecting tool or a sales closing tool are simple and direct. They are:

1. Prospecting. This is the first step and refers to exploring the potential market to find the most likely and best qualified prospects.

2. Analyze your prospect. Know who you are going to make the presentation to and what needs joining Project AHEAD will satisfy.

3. Approach. This is your encounter with the prospect in preparation for making the presentation.

4. Presentation. This is the meat of the sale. It is telling the prospect what we have to offer and how it can be of benefit to him now and later.

5. Handling Objections. This is actually a digression from your presentation, but objections cannot be ignored. Handle them positively and remove any negative thoughts from the prospect.

6. Close. This is the highlight of the presentation. It is a combination of empathy for the needs of the prospect and drive to close the sale. A good balance of both empathy and drive will put you close to the top in the recruiting force.

7. Followup! Followup! Followup!

A Parting Shot

You will have a full range of promotional tools to assist you in the sales presentation. The highlight of these materials is the sales closing kit, a deskside flip chart which takes you and the prospect through a logical progression of Project AHEAD. In making effective sales appeals to young people, there are certain basic rules to follow. The underlying reason is that young men and women want to be approached as adults, not children.

1. Never talk down to young people. You may think that using "cool" language sounds "hip," but it may be coming across to the young person sounding "corny," foolish or condescending. Sincerity and honesty are always appropriate and will be more the natural you.

2. Be totally straightforward. Young people are cocky and arrogant at times and will test the limits of your patience to see if the product is a gimmick. The product is good, and it stands alone. A straightforward presentation will be your strongest asset.

3. Give the young person credit for being motivated by logical and rational values. Do not overpresent the program. The benefits of the program are enough without adding any garnish. Your presentation should be clear and concise, emphasizing the opportunities and services the program offers.

4. Be as personal as possible. Know who the prospect is and how Project AHEAD can fit into his world. Remember, people persuade people, programs do not. The desire to be personally recognized as a person of worth and value gives a young person a clear identity of himself and opens the channels to real, two-way communication.

Finally, we do not know if you remember how difficult it was to be 18, 19 or 20 years old. In case you do not remember, this was the period that older people always regarded as the prime of life. But for you, it was often a very difficult and trying time when you were presented with more decisions to make than you could cope with. For some of your best quality prospects, Project AHEAD may be the greatest thing that ever happened to them. They will meet new people, see new places, and have an opportunity to make a career decision based on the real world. Keep this in mind as you make your presentation, along with the empathy we talked about earlier.

CHAPTER III

PROJECT AHEAD AND THE COLLEGE

Selling Project AHEAD to Prospective Participating Institutions

Prior to approaching any school about participating in Project AHEAD, sufficient research should be done so that the person or persons representing the Army are knowledgeable about the school being contacted. Each state has its own system of higher education, for example, and that organizational structure is important in determining the approach to be used.

Other factors that might have a bearing upon the approach to a school are listed below. The importance of each will vary greatly from state to state, and even from school to school, and should be evaluated accordingly.

1. Source of funds. Particularly important when dealing with community colleges to which local support is crucial.
2. Governing body
3. Admissions requirements
4. VA office and function
5. Types of degrees
6. Courses offered
7. Accreditation status
8. Enrollment situation
9. 2-year or 4-year
10. Public or private
11. SOC affiliation

Experience to date indicates a public institution is much more likely to be receptive to Project AHEAD than a private school. Four-year public institutions, for example, usually already have a veterans affairs officer and usually offer more appealing college credit benefits to veterans. Evenually, schools of every type--4-year, public, community college, vo-tech, and private--throughout a district recruiting command should be contacted. This technique offers prospects the increasingly strong incentive of accessibility to a campus near home.

Promoting Project AHEAD

In addition to colleges and agencies directly involved with higher education, certain related organizations and persons in related fields also are very important to the success of Project AHEAD.

One aspect of this importance revolves around the concept of creating a demand. Explaining Project AHEAD to high school counselors, for example, is apt to prompt the counselors to discuss Project AHEAD with the college reps with whom they come in contact. A few inquiries from counselors usually will be enough to perk the interest of a nonparticipating college. A counselor who understands Project AHEAD and is enthusiastic about its possibilities also can be very helpful in contacting a primary prospect audience.

Other examples of important auxiliary contacts include:

1. Parent Teacher Organization. In Ohio, a presentation to the State PTA resulted in the organization including a flyer on Project AHEAD in its beginning of the school year packet to each PTA group across the state.

2. High school principals.

3. State-operated education agencies. This category includes vocational curriculum developers and divisions of guidance and testing.

4. Persons in charge of research projects revolving around occupational decisions and secondary education. At least one such project usually is ongoing at one of the major colleges in every state.

5. Boards of Education. In addition to the individual school boards, a state organization exists in every state.

6. Opportunity program administrators. Such programs involve adult education, especially high school completion, and usually are operated in major cities.

Approaching the College

While no hard and fast rule is applicable to every college situation, the press of time and other factors suggest the initial contact be made by telephone to set an appointment followed by a letter. This written contact should include a concise description of Project AHEAD, emphasizing the benefits to a participating college and that Project AHEAD is operational at other schools.

Start at the top with the president or near the top, depending upon the level at which admissions and program policy is decided. Prior research should identify the person or persons to contact.

After the president or whomever has had an opportunity to digest the information that was sent, the Project AHEAD district recruiting command coordinator should call the college contact to arrange a meeting at which Project AHEAD can be discussed in detail. The college may have several persons attend the meeting. Army representation should be limited to a maximum of three, preferably less.

Expertise exists within the Ayer field force on the actual operation of Project AHEAD. A district recruiting command just beginning to introduce Project AHEAD in its area should request the assistance of an Ayer representative experienced in establishing the program.

The assistance of an institution already involved in Project AHEAD also could be a valuable asset in selling the concept to other institutions. Administrators at several schools have expressed willingness to be of assistance.

Points to Cover During the Initial Meeting

The following sequence has evolved out of numerous successful presentations made at the Peoria DRC. While all the points are important, the sequence may not prove to be as comfortable for persons at other DRCs and should not be considered static.

1. History of Project AHEAD
2. General concept of program
3. How program works in practice
4. Benefits of participation
5. Opportunity for questions
6. Putting the program into effect at the school

Putting the Program into Operation

Once an agreement is reached by a school to participate in Project AHEAD, specific implementation steps should be settled immediately to avoid the real possibility of agreement without implementation. Therefore, action should be taken as quickly as possible to get the program into being.

1. Preparation of an explanatory pamphlet by the college. This not only is necessary as a promotional tool, but it also helps college officials formalize their ideas about how their program will operate. The DRC representative should consult with the school in preparing this pamphlet to insure that no misleading statements find their way into print.

2. School designates contact person to coordinate Project AHEAD.

3. Promotion folders issued to each recruiting station for display and distribution. Determining which recruiting stations will receive promotional literature about a participating school will depend largely upon the areas from which the school draws.

4. Find individuals interested in enlisting and pursuing degree via Project AHEAD.

5. Hold news conference or issue news release and photo featuring first enlistee to join program.

6. Once the program is established, the task of continuing coordination should be assigned to a qualified person in the DRC who is able to serve in a long term liaison capacity.

Good Relations with Entire Higher Education Community are Imperative

A sympathetic understanding and acceptance of Project AHEAD by state, area, and national educational agencies is invaluable to the success of the concept and could lead to an official endorsement. Again depending upon the area and state, such agencies differ in organization and jurisdiction. Generally, they can be categorized as follows:

1. Governing body for state 2-year institutions--often under the state board of regents with a state education official serving as administrator.

2. State board of regents or state board of education.

3. Localized consortiums. A situation in which a group of schools in a particular area are cooperating under a formalized plan with respect to student exchange, use of facilities, mutual fund raising efforts, etc.

4. Various state organizations such as state versions of Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Specific examples of assistance provided by such agencies are listed here to give some idea of possible avenues to explore.

1. South Dakota State Board of Regents passed a resolution saying young men and women who join the Army automatically qualify for admission to any one of the South Dakota state colleges.

2. The vice-chancellor in charge of Ohio's 2-year colleges presented the Project AHEAD concept to the presidents of the state's 2-year colleges, obviously enhancing credibility and opening the door for individual contacts.

The Relationship of SOC to Project AHEAD

To avoid confusion about the relationship of Project AHEAD to the Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC) program, several points need to be understood.

1. SOC is a contractual network. Only institutions that agree to provisions determined jointly by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the Department of Defense can participate in the program. Project AHEAD allows a participating school to set up its own program, within suggested guidelines, with respect to admissions requirements, determination of credits, etc.

2. SOC as an organization is funded in part by the Department of Defense. Project AHEAD is a concept rather than an organization, and the only funding available to participating schools is the percentage of tuition costs covered by the Army's tuition assistance plan or the GI Bill benefits used by a veteran to cover education costs.

3. The general SOC emphasis is upon the national network with particular emphasis upon institutions providing educational programs on or within a few miles of military installations and bases. The Project AHEAD emphasis is more local, stressing the relationship between a student/soldier and an institution within the geographic area of his or her home. Within this framework, the benefits to participating colleges are much broader with respect to such concerns as student recruitment, dealing with the dropout problem and promotion possibilities.

With these distinctions in mind, the general provision of SOC and Project AHEAD not only should be viewed as compatible, but as highly complementary. This is particularly true in light of the fact that many persons who enroll in Project AHEAD probably will be taking courses offered through the SOC program while on active duty.

Because of its predisposition to cooperate with the military, as established by SOC involvement, the SOC school is an excellent candidate to offer Project AHEAD and should be approached to do so. Local liaison must be established with these schools on a one-to-one basis and personal relationships established.

CHAPTER IV

PROJECT AHEAD--THE END

Conclusion

Project AHEAD is not just another merchandising tool. It goes a lot deeper than that. Some independent research has pointed out quite clearly that Project AHEAD is an idea whose time has come. It is truly what the name implies. It is Army Help for Education And Development. The beauty of the program is that it is being carried out by hundreds of participating colleges and universities who can see that it fulfills a need, a real need, to provide unique and continuing opportunities for young Americans to complete their educations. It doesn't lock out people already in service, either. They have the same chance to enroll and take part as the newest enlistee. We might note that this educational adventure is also open to members of the recruiting force who can use Project AHEAD to prepare for their personal futures as well as for their military advancement and promotion.

While Project AHEAD is not a recruiting option, it has the full backing and support of the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, major commanders, and most importantly, the Commanding General of the US Army Recruiting Command who has said "Go!" With this kind of backing and support, you can use Project AHEAD with confidence in reaching quality young people across the nation. It is your program. Never before has so much effort and planning been mustered to assure that a program is useful and beneficial to the recruiting force.

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But, as we have already said, Project AHEAD is not just an Army program. It is also the program of hundreds of participating colleges across the nation. These schools are solidly behind the program as a means to develop an Army of intelligent, creative, and highly motivated people who can serve their country, their community and themselves. Herb Fairfield, Program Coordinator at Indiana University, has said: "This is an on going program with strong benefits to all concerned. It provides a new thrust to in-service people with an interest in higher education."

Project AHEAD allows communities and community leaders to keep close to its youth. The greatest assets and resources that any state or community has are its youth. They are interested in keeping these youth in their areas. It is vital to their continued growth and development. Project AHEAD allows communities to be tune with the needs of its youth. Dr. Frances Nickerson, Associate Commissioner of Higher Education for Administration, South Dakota, said, "We think the program is strong because it allows us to recruit South Dakota kids for a post-Army commitment in their own state. We want to keep our young people right here...and when they're not (serving in the Army, for example)...we like to keep in touch."

We are a nation of "joiners." Everyone wants to "belong." Project AHEAD gives the student/soldier a strong sense of identification with a recognized institution...a sense of belonging. It can be his or her touchstone with

home and reality. And best of all, it does away with the old way of thinking that the Army is a "viable alternative" to the world of work or continued education. Instead, we become partners in the continuous process of career preparation. Mr. William Utley, Dean of the College of Continuing Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in talking about the cooperative aspects of Project AHEAD in conjunction with their "Home-Base" program, has said, "'Home-Base' program offers the best of both worlds. Those who elect the military career don't have to forego their college education. And those people signing up for a limited enlistment, get a running start on their education."

So this is Project AHEAD. Last year we proved that we could recruit the manpower needed to fill the ranks of the Army. This was done without sacrificing the "quality" of the Army. This year we are going to go over the top again, but with the highest quality Army with the most high school graduates, and the most college graduates that we have ever had in our 200 years of history.

The researchers, planners, and advertising and sales promotion specialists have done their part of the action. In the end, it always comes down to the man or woman on the front line--the recruiter. You have enlisted in a crusade, if you will, a crusade for an Army that can fulfill its essential job for the nation and, at the same time, serve its citizen soldiers as an integral means to their formal and continuing education. Sell Project AHEAD with pride.

Good Recruiting!!